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Representative Scott E. Reske

Will you be able to vote?

Due to new state laws, you will be required to have a valid Indiana state picture ID to vote. Please visit my website, www.in.gov/H37, to learn more about this law and how to obtain an identification card and rules concerning absentee voting.



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Helping Hoosier Families



Property Tax Relief



2006 Session Report

Additional Property Tax RELIEF

At the start of the 2006 session of the Indiana General Assembly, property tax relief was identified as a priority by members of both parties. When the smoke cleared, we were able to provide some relief for homeowners.

This year, about 1.5 million homeowners will receive a one-time increase in the state homestead credit from 20 to 28 percent. This credit will provide around \$100 million in property tax relief in 2006.

Rep. Reske In 2007, the state homestead deduction will increase from \$35,000 to \$45,000 for one year only. This relief will provide an additional \$127 million in relief for homeowners.

Starting in 2008, the state will gradually phase in a cap on property tax bills at two percent of a home's value. This cap would apply to all classes of property in Indiana, starting in 2010.

While this relief is welcome, it still does not make up for the massive increases in local property taxes that were passed on to home and business owners through the biennial state budget approved in 2005 by the Republicans leading our state's government. At the time, that budget increased the burden on local property taxpayers to the tune of an estimated \$850 million.

And that means you are still going to see your property taxes go up when you get your next tax bill. The time to have enacted true, lasting property tax relief was 2005, but nothing was done by those in charge.

Indiana tightens eminent domain law

Improving protection for homeowners

In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that local governments can use the process of eminent domain to take private property, such as homes and businesses, in order to hand it over to a private developer.

Indiana lawmakers immediately began working on a plan to protect the property rights of Hoosiers. Months of bipartisan work has resulted in legislation that tightens Indiana's eminent domain laws and restricts the ability of most government units to seize private property and transfer it to private entities for development.

The new legislation sets strict standards for property acquisition through eminent domain, and limits its use to only truly blighted and decaying properties. This will prevent a developer from being able to have a local government use eminent domain to seize your property simply because they think it might be a good spot for a new strip mall.

It received unanimous support, but there are still potential problems that need to be addressed. Most troublesome is the fact that the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is exempt from complying with the new restrictions.

There are concerns that INDOT will use this exemption to seize property for some of the road privatization projects proposed by the governor, such as the Interstate 69 extension or other unannounced projects in other areas of the state.



Rep. Reske had the honor of leading the posthumous presentation of The Bronze Star medal to members of Indiana resident Deryk L. Hallal's family for the United States Marine Corps. Hallal, a Private First Class, was serving as a rifleman when he was killed April 6, 2004, by hostile fire in Anbar Province in Iraq.

PFC Hallal was serving with Second Battalion, Fourth Marine Regiment. Rep. Reske, a Colonel in the United States Marine Corps Reserve, also served in Iraq. His duties involved action with Second Battalion, Fourth Marine Regiment approximately the same time as PFC Hallal.

A summary of new legislation

FUNERAL PROTESTS

New legislation increases the penalty for disorderly conduct occurring near the location of a funeral, memorial service, or viewing. The bill is largely in response to a group from Kansas that has chosen to stage protests at the funerals of Hoosier soldiers killed in action, using the occasion to make a political statement.



SEX OFFENDERS

A series of bills continue our state's efforts to crack down on sex offenders. The bills clarify the designation of "sexually violent predator," require sex offenders to wear GPS tracking devices, establish lifetime parole for these offenders, ban sex offenders' access to locations where children may be present, keep better track of sex offenders' whereabouts with the new DOC sex offender registry, and make the crime of human trafficking of a minor a felony.

MILITARY RELIEF FUND

The general assembly established the military relief fund to provide grants for Hoosiers whose family members have been called into duty since September 11, 2001. A portion of the money for the fund will be raised through the sale of a new Hoosier veteran license plate created through the bill.

DRUG ABUSE AND CHILDREN

At least two pieces of legislation this session attempt to regulate controlled substances abuse through study and harsher penalties for crimes related to drug abuse. One increases the penalties for neglect of a child if the neglect is a result of drug abuse or production, while another authorizes the study of the effects of substance abuse or alcohol use during pregnancy.

HEALTH INITIATIVES

Indiana is moving forward with its improved health initiative, which encourages healthier eating habits among school children by requiring school vending machines to offer more "better choice" food items.

FIGHTING METH

New legislation continued the crackdown on production of methamphetamine by allowing the destruction of contaminated equipment that was used to produce meth. These statewide regulations for meth labs will create uniform reporting and detection that will help law enforcement agencies get a handle on the problem.

HELPING INJURED DRIVERS

Law enforcement officers and health care professionals will have an easier time identifying serious medical conditions of injured or impaired drivers. The bill allows medical condition symbols to be included on Indiana driver's licenses and permits.

NEW LICENSE PLATES

New legislation requires the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles to issue personalized license plates annually. Other bills also authorize new specialized license plates, including an In God We Trust plate, a disabled veterans plate, the use of antique license plates on antique cars, and a specialty plate for motorcyclists.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NOTIFICATION

All counties in Indiana may now set up an emergency telephone notification system to warn Hoosiers in the event of an emergency or impending disaster.

AGGRESSIVE DRIVING

The general assembly worked to combat road rage by making aggressive driving a Class A misdemeanor or a felony if it results in the injury or death of another person.

SCHOOL SAFETY



The general assembly has attempted to ensure the safety of schoolchildren and to protect school employees by making possession of a knife on school property or a school bus a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by up to a 180-day prison term or a fine of \$1,000.

FIREWORKS LAWS



Indiana residents can now launch fireworks on their own property, with certain restrictions. The bill authorizes the discharge of fireworks on personal property or in specially approved fireworks discharge areas and charges a five percent public safety fee for the retail sale of fireworks, which will go to the Indiana Department of Homeland Security for special training programs for public safety officials.

HOME IMPROVEMENT FRAUD

The circumstances under which home improvement fraud can now be prosecuted have been expanded. The bill increases the penalties for home improvement fraud if the improvements were made on the property of a senior citizen or if more than two clauses of home improvement laws were violated.

CHILD CURFEWS

Long hours of debate over curfew laws in Indiana have finally reached a compromise with new legislation. Children may stay out past curfew if they are carrying a written note from a parent detailing their involvement in a parent-approved activity or event.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

New legislation established the procedure for a public health authority to obtain or issue an order to restrict the movement of an individual when there is evidence that the person has been exposed to a communicable disease. The bill also requires a public health authority to distribute certain information about the disease and quarantine procedures to the public.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

New legislation establishes emergency management mobile support teams and legalizes the extension of full-time state employee protections to the members of these volunteer medical teams for the duration of their service. Establishing these mobile support teams and then honoring them for their service are two ways to take steps forward in improving Indiana's approach to disaster relief.

STOPPING UNWANTED FAXES

Hoosiers now have protection against undesired fax advertisements, which authorizes the Indiana attorney general to recover civil penalties of up to \$1,500.

DOMESTIC BATTERY

Persons guilty of domestic battery now face harsher penalties. New legislation makes domestic battery, including strangulation, a Class D felony if it is knowingly committed in the presence of a child under the age of 16 or if the offender has committed a previous substantially-related crime in Indiana.



REDUCING SMOKING

Indiana takes further steps to reduce smoking in the state with legislation which allows an employer to implement financial incentives related to employer-provided health benefits to reduce employee tobacco use.

The above is a summary of new legislation—many of which were backed by Rep. Reske.